

Coburn Amendment #556- To eliminate program duplication, fragmentation, and overlap within the 80 “economic development” programs

Background: In 2011, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) highlighted the duplication and overlap between 80 “economic development” programs within 4 Departments and agencies. These programs have an annual cost of \$6.5 billion.

This amendment allows the appropriate committees to reduce the deficit through eliminating, consolidating or reforming duplicative “economic development” programs outlined in GAO’s annual report to reduce program duplication.

GAO’s found “economic development” programs within the following Departments:

Commerce Department, 11 programs

Housing and Urban Development Department, 14 programs

Agriculture Department, 35 programs

Small Business Administration, 18 programs

GAO’s Report Highlighted:

There are 80 programs at 4 agencies doing economic development work for the federal government; 52 of which help with —entrepreneurial efforts and 19 with tourism.

Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA), which runs —8 of the programs GAO reviewed, continues to rely on a potentially incomplete set of variables and self-reported data to assess the effectiveness of grants. “The poor data —may lead to inaccurate claims about the success of the program.”

USDA’s Office of Rural Development, which administers 31 of the programs GAO reviewed, “has yet to implement the USDA Inspector General 2003 recommendations related to ensuring that data exist to

measure the accomplishments of one of its largest rural business programs.”¹

¹ GAO-11-318SP, Opportunities to Reduce Potential Duplication in Government Programs, Save Tax Dollars, and Enhance Revenue, Government Accountability Office, March 2011.